



Becoming a Fruitful Tree

CHRIST AND THE
LIMITS OF
LEGAL THINKING

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OVER THE YEARS I have struggled with myself and have counseled with others as they have grappled with issues of compartmentalization, integrity, balance, choice of career, finding meaning in work, why we come to law school, and why we do what we do after we leave law school. Students ask whether they should pursue lofty goals or seek a job in which they can better support their family.

TREE ILLUSTRATIONS BY MCRAY MAGLEBY



Others wonder what it means to have a life of integrity while practicing law. Women and, increasingly, men ask how they can find an appropriate balance between competing demands of family and profession. We all attempt to make sense of our lives in the law.

I will return to some of these concerns about integrity, balance, and career choice, but I want to approach the issue through discussing idolatry and law. In a remarkable article in 1976 entitled “The False Gods We Worship,” President Spencer W. Kimball called us to repent from trusting in the arm of flesh: “In spite of our delight in defining ourselves as modern, and our tendency to think we possess a sophistication that no people in the past ever had—in spite of these things, we are, on the whole, an idolatrous people.”¹ He explained, “I use the word *idolatry* intentionally. . . . Whatever thing a man sets his heart and his trust in most is his god; and if his god doesn’t also happen to be the true and living God of Israel, that man is laboring in idolatry.”² If pressed to see how this would apply to us as lawyers, perhaps our initial response might be to see our false gods as vanity, power, wealth, or recognition. While I do not mean to underrate the allure of these false gods, today I mean to focus on two perhaps less obvious false gods that we as lawyers are also prone to worship: principles and goals.

In the first section of the Doctrine and Covenants, we are told that “every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god, whose image is in the likeness of the world.”³ What is the image of our god, whose image is in the likeness of our legal world? In contrast to the physical creations of engineers or artists, lawyers create primarily a world of ideas. We balance, structure, restructure, categorize, recategorize, interpret, and apply ideas and concepts. “Preemption,” “501(c)(3) organization,” “illegal alien,” and “Fair Labor Standards Act violation” are all ultimately abstract conceptions in an equally abstract world

of legal structures and norms. Law students are taught early to “think like a lawyer” in order to access this abstract legal world. Students quickly learn legal ways of thinking and arguing, chief among which are principles and goals.

We use both principles and goals in legal analysis: principles include black letter law, *prima facie* cases, or outlines of course material. Goals appear in balancing tests, arguments for public policy, and theories of legal realism or justice. We also often use principles and goals in how we think about the legal profession. Principle-based approaches see law as devotion to principle over emotion, as ensuring principles such as due process, or as a set of universal principles. Goal-oriented approaches see law as instrumental, such as pursuit of justice, equity, or social stability. My argument today

is that we often create a god in the image of our legal world: we worship the god of correct principles or the god of worthwhile goals. These false gods are not exclusive to lawyers (to some extent they can be seen as occurring throughout Western thinking since the Enlightenment) but are endemic and patterned after the likeness of our legal world. Worship of these false gods has very practical implications. Let me illustrate this by looking at how they affect our understandings of integrity, balance, and career choice.

Worship of Principles and Goals

One form of idolatry borrowed from legal thinking is the worship of principles. We see the gospel as a set of principles to be learned and applied—a master outline to learn and follow. In this view the gospel can be reduced to a group of principles, such as justice, mercy, faith, tithing, and provident living. Our job is to learn and live each principle. We may understand that these principles have a hierarchy of importance or multiple elements, but we ultimately see the gospel as a set of principles to be understood and lived. With this mind-set there usually isn’t an obvious connection between the gospel and lawyering, except in seeing the gospel as a source of ultimate moral principles and ethical guidelines for our work as lawyers. In fact, it seems sort of silly to those

worshipping abstract principles to suggest that there is more connection between the legal world and the gospel. While there may be some larger moral principles underlying bankruptcy, tort law, or tax law, as well as some morally based ethical rules, these fields each operate primarily under their own set of very secular rules. Fencing-in and fencing-out rules, for example, seem completely unconnected to the gospel. In a similar way, from this vantage point our work in the legal world is also largely separate from the gospel. When we act in the world, we act on the world's terms: billable hours, academic rank and status, cases won, IPOs handled. For the worshipper of correct principles, life is primarily a set of separate boxes governed by separate principles.

What does worship of principles mean for questions of integrity, balance, and career choice? In the worship of correct principles, integrity means accepting gospel limits on the box of our legal profession. The box of work as a lawyer must fit in the overall box of the gospel. Integrity here means that gospel principles provide ethical boundaries for our work and also that we drill some holes in the box of work, allowing gospel principles in to inspire high ethical and personal standards. Balance means trying to squeeze in all the needed boxes in our lives: professional obligations, Church work, family time, and personal spiritual development. If we're honest, we're often left a bit uncomfortable because the box of time spent on our legal work is usually larger than the boxes for family and the Church, which we know are higher in the ultimate hierarchy of principles. But the boxes often just seem to come that way. Career choice from this approach is equally problematic: we are torn between the worthwhile principles of supporting a family, having time for family, and contributing to society.

Principles, however, are not the only objects of worship we borrow from our legal world. Many law students are drawn to the practice of law because of goal-based approaches. Students want to make a difference, serve an underrepresented population, or improve access to justice. Legal norms themselves can be seen to embody the pursuit of worthwhile goals in public policy or reflect multiple goals, such as in balancing





tests. We may begin to see the gospel as a set of goals or aspirations, following the likeness of our legal world. We see the goal of getting to the celestial kingdom, the goal of building an eternal family, and the goal of building the kingdom here on earth. We have multiple smaller goals, such as giving significant professional service, building the kingdom by faithfully fulfilling callings, and creating a spiritual home environment.

So what do integrity, balance, and career choice look like here? I suggest that when we

worship worthwhile goals, integrity means spending all of one's life dedicated to what matters most. A person with integrity in this view is one who stays focused on the big picture, who constantly remembers their eternal goals. Balance, theoretically at least, shouldn't be a problem, because one is supposed to be focusing on what's most important. The problem, of course, is balancing subsidiary goals such as professional service, Church service, and family time. This can become a nightmare

balancing test in which everything is the most important. Elder Bruce C. Hafen told the story of a young mother with "a large family, a responsible Church calling, and a busy husband. She was bewildered about what should come first in her life and when. Someone told her, 'Well, just be sure you put the Lord's work first.' Her reply: 'But what if it is all the Lord's work?'"⁴

Choosing a profession also seems simple—at least at the outset. Worshipping goals suggests that we should find a profession in which we can actively do the most good: we should defend the defenseless, build the Church and kingdom, or teach the gospel. If we can't find work doing this, we feel discouraged and a bit guilty. Even if we do find deeply meaningful work, worship of goals can result in discouragement and burnout when we realize the inevitable amount of time spent in less meaningful aspects of our work or if we see limited success in accomplishing our goals.

Does Salvation Come by Principles or Goals?

At this point (or perhaps considerably earlier), some of you may respond that I am setting up straw men. "These aren't false gods," you might say. "If we really had a true understanding of all gospel principles, we would be humble, patient, kind, and long-suffering, and we would be celestial material." Or, "Teaching the gospel is about teaching correct principles," you might say. The most basic gospel manual is titled *Gospel Principles*, after all. We can use principles of revelation or priesthood blessings to help us resolve apparent conflicts among principles we are asked to meet. If one principle cannot resolve a situation, another, such as faith, humility, or patience, might be what is required.

Or you might argue that the gospel does require us to focus on worthy goals. We are regularly encouraged to focus on what matters most and to align our lives with celestial priorities. Issues of discouragement or burnout are merely a lack of vision. Balance itself or being in tune with revelation can be goals that we pursue, reconciling otherwise competing demands.

In response, let me diverge for a moment. When preaching to the unrighteous King

Noah and his court, Abinadi posed this question: “Doth salvation come by the law of Moses? What say ye? And they answered and said that salvation did come by the law of Moses.”⁵ But here comes the telling part. Abinadi said, “I know if ye keep the commandments of God ye shall be saved.”⁶ And then, after reminding Noah and the priests that they weren’t quite living up to the Ten Commandments that were the core of the law of Moses, he gave a fuller answer: “And moreover, I say unto you, that salvation doth not come by the law alone; and were it not for the atonement, which God himself shall make for the sins and iniquities of his people, that they must unavoidably perish, notwithstanding the law of Moses.”⁷

Abinadi taught that if we could keep all the commandments we could be saved—“if ye keep the commandments of God ye shall be saved”—but explained that salvation does not come by the law alone: “[W]ere it not for the atonement, [his people] must unavoidably perish, notwithstanding the law of Moses.”

Our salvation will not come through our perfection. If we want to worship what will save us, we shouldn’t set up the law of Moses as our idol. In a similar vein, I would suggest that salvation does not come through the worship of correct principles or worthwhile goals. Of course, if our lives truly reflected a perfect understanding of gospel principles and goals, we would be saved, but our salvation will not come through principles and goals alone.

It may seem unduly harsh to suggest that we are tempted to actually worship principles and goals. But, as President Kimball explained, “Whatever thing a man sets his heart and his trust in most is his god.” Ultimately, we worship what we think will save us. We worship where we put our time, attention, focus, trust, and love. Do we devote time, attention, and love to marshaling and following gospel principles or seeking eternal goals? Do we trust these principles or goals to see us through difficult decisions? While correct principles and worthy

goals are not bad in themselves, they are ultimately insufficient. We are saved only by the true and living God, not by principles or goals—however useful these may be. To repeat President Kimball, “Whatever thing a man sets his heart and his trust in most is his god; and if his god doesn’t also happen to be the true and living God of Israel, that man is laboring in idolatry.”

Please don’t misunderstand me. I recognize that principles can help us to understand and teach doctrine clearly and that goals can help us to exercise our agency wisely, but my point is that neither can save and that we should not use these to order our thinking about our lives. When our conceptions of integrity, balance, and career choice stem from beliefs in principles or goals instead of from worship of a living God, then principles and goals become the way we order our thinking and living. If we let principles and goals order our paths and define our lives, I suggest that we do indeed make these the focus of our worship. The practices and ordinances of the law of Moses were helpful as reminders, types, and teaching patterns, just as principles and goals can be in our world. The temptation for us, as it was for those under the law of Moses, is to see and worship the stepping-stone and to lose sight of what it points us to.



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Worshipping a Living God: Insights on Integrity, Balance, and Career Choice

So what should we worship? How does this look different from a worship of principles or goals? At one point in the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord stated: “I give unto you these sayings that you may understand and know how to worship, and know what you worship.”⁸ To what sayings was the Lord referring? The verses immediately prior to this contain a passage similar to that in the first chapter of the Gospel of John, which describes Christ as Creator, the Only Begotten of the Father, growing from grace to grace, being baptized, and receiving the Father’s glory.⁹ What do we worship? We worship a living God. We worship Christ. If we see Christ as the center of our worship, so many scriptures and so much in life fall into place.

For example, Christ teaches in the book of 3 Nephi that “this is the gospel which I have given unto you—that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me.”¹⁰ The gospel there is not defined as a set of principles or goals but as Christ doing the will of the Father. Or look at Nephi’s vision, also in the Book of Mormon. What was the tree, the purpose of our quest in life? When Nephi asked for an interpretation of the tree for which the righteous are seeking, he was shown the birth and life of Christ.¹¹

Maybe most or all of this was already obvious to you. To me, however, a clear understanding that we worship a living God rather than principles or goals gives illumination to hard questions of balance, integrity, and life as a lawyer. Let me illustrate this first visually

with a scriptural image that I love. Christ and eternal life (which is a life like Christ's), are often compared to trees in scripture, such as the tree of life in the Garden of Eden, the tree of Nephi's vision, and the tree "springing up in you unto everlasting life"¹² in chapters 32 and 33 of the book of Alma. To me this points toward the living power of Christ as opposed to the deadness of principles, goals, or other false gods.¹³ Worship of Christ builds our lives into organic, living wholes.

What does worship of a living God mean for difficult questions of integrity, balance, and career choice? If we worship principles, then it is easy to segregate work as a lawyer and the gospel. At most, integrity merely brings good principles, such as compassion or honesty, into the basically self-contained world of work. The rest of work is a matter of competing on the world's terms, or figuring out and applying the laws and principles of that realm. But in the worship of Christ there is ultimately no distinction between secular and spiritual, no limits on what we must give to the Lord. All our lives are to be holy and consecrated, not just the parts when we attend the temple or prepare and teach our Sunday School lessons. Through the Holy Spirit we can have guidance in our lawyerly work and careers and can be led to be instruments in the Lord's hands. We serve Him when we serve "the least of these"¹⁴ through writing their wills, resolving their disputes, and helping them keep plans and decisions within the law. We serve the same Christ whether we serve in the home, in a general counsel's office, or in Primary. Consecrated service knows no boundaries and has no boxes. Our legal work becomes an extension of our worship, wherever and however we are led to serve.

Integrity stemming from a worship of Christ means not merely consecration to a goal but consecration to an omnipotent, divine, omniscient, and loving Being who has our ultimate welfare at heart. We may not see how something we are doing contributes to His purposes, but we can trust that He does when we submit our agency and goals to His will. As President Ezra Taft Benson taught, "When we put God first, all other things fall into their proper place or drop out of our lives. Our love of the Lord will govern the claims for our affection, the demands on our time, the interests we pursue, and the order of our priorities."¹⁵ I have found that when I am motivated by the love of the Lord rather than by my own goals, however righteous, I am less prone to discouragement or burnout. I ask and listen more for guidance in my daily life. I can submit to disappointments and the less fulfilling or enjoyable aspects of righteous service because I trust Christ, His timing, and His purposes. People with the integrity that flows from a life consecrated to God exude peace and inspire those around them. As Elder D. Todd Christofferson explained, "A consecrated life is a beautiful thing. Its strength and serenity are 'as a very fruitful tree which is planted in a goodly land, by a pure stream, that yieldeth much precious fruit.'"¹⁶

In a similar way, worshipping Christ brings balance to life. If life is merely a set of competing principles or goals, we can never be confident that we have hit the right balance. If I spend time with my family—a worthy principle—I may be ignoring the principles of fulfilling responsibilities at work or taking care of my health, which are also important principles. Or if I have one overriding goal, it's hard to know how to divide my time among lesser goals or how to avoid burnout.

When I think of balance and worshipping Christ, I think of a wonderful allegory that Chieko N. Okazaki (a former counselor in the general Relief Society presidency) taught, also based on the image of a tree. She contrasted the image of a tree to more common images of balance, such as a fiddler on the roof; a gymnast on a balance beam; or "the traditional statue of Justice, blindfolded and [weighing] truth and error, justice and injustice."¹⁷ As she described it:

[M]ost trees are naturally symmetrical, if they're allowed to grow with access on all sides to the same amount of sun, wind, and soil. But sometimes a tree is close to a house, so it has lots of branches on one side but not very many on the other. Sometimes, like on the windward side of Hawaii, the wind blows steadily for most of the year from one direction, so the tree bends under that wind, pointing inland. Sometimes a tree is too close to another tree, so that it grows in a curve, seeking an open space where it can get more sunlight.

We don't think of these trees as sick or handicapped or dysfunctional. We don't even think of them as out of balance, even though they are no longer symmetrical. They're healthy and functional and will do just fine for years. Why? Because it's not the branches on the right that have to balance the branches on the left. The point of balance is between the branches and the roots. If the roots are sturdy and run deep into the soil, then the tree as a whole is strong and healthy and in balance. . . .

What are the roots in our lives that give us this kind of health and stability? It's our relationship with the Savior.¹⁸

We are to be "rooted and grounded in . . . the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that [we] might be filled with all the fulness of God."¹⁹

Sister Okazaki wrote:

If you felt "rooted and grounded in love," wouldn't it be easier to feel balance in yourself? Wouldn't you be able to put out new branches in areas where you need them? Wouldn't you feel a stronger ability to stay focused on the important parts of your life? Wouldn't it be easier to set priorities and make decisions?²⁰

Worship of a true and living and loving God gives balance. The nightmare balancing test of too many all-important goals subsides as we trust in God and make our daily focus simply doing what He asks at any given moment. In contrast, worship of principles and goals ultimately leaves us like the heroes in a Greek epic, constantly trying to please one fickle god without upsetting another, caught between competing righteous goals and principles.

What about worship of a living God and career choices? I am reminded again of President Benson's teaching: "When we put God first, all other things fall into their proper place or drop out of our lives. Our love of the Lord will govern the claims for our affection, the demands on our time, the interests we pursue, and the order of our priorities." What does that mean for our careers? Just as for the question of balance, the answer may be that this will not be the same for all of us or the same at all seasons of our lives. We are all given gifts to discover, develop, and share and have ways, both personal and

professional, that we can use those gifts to serve God's children.

Professor Jeffery Thompson of the BYU Marriott School of Management—who researches career choice and satisfaction issues—spoke at a BYU devotional and reminded us that we have all been given gifts and talents that can be expressed in one or many professional callings.²¹ He said:

[F]inding your calling in life may not be a matter of finding the one right job. Instead, it may be that your calling is to bring your unique spiritual gifts to whatever position the Lord blesses you with.

*If you exercise faith in the Lord, follow His spirit, and seek to amplify your gifts, you will be led gradually to a place where you are well equipped to serve.*²²

He summarized his points about a professional calling, saying, “[A]s with all important questions, when it comes to asking what our calling in life is, Jesus Christ is in the answer. . . . You can call upon the grace of Christ to help you with your professional calling.”²³ While we do have to use our agency and think through options and consequences, we don’t have to balance competing principles and desires alone as we work through career options.

In our attempts to live a consecrated life, we recognize that “[w]ork is simply one stage upon which we can act out our service to God and our fellowmen.”²⁴ In contrast to the worship of goals, when worshipping a living God we don’t necessarily need to be pursuing a professional calling that others or even we see as ultimately important. If we want to serve, and if we pray and work for opportunities to do so, we can trust that an omnipotent, omniscient, and loving God can lead us to where we can serve best in all aspects of our lives, including our careers. Our own agency, desires, and plans still play an important role, but these take their proper place as merely stewardship decisions over time, talents, and lives that are not truly ours. We plan, organize, and balance the best we can but do so in the light of guidance from a Master who consecrates our efforts, at times overrides our plans, and always lovingly corrects and improves our paths as we let Him.



If we trust in Christ and seek His guidance in career decisions, we come to realize that the perhaps seemingly unrelated parts of our professional ministries and lives come together in one organic whole of service to God. At this point we may see ourselves as disciple-lawyers or disciple-scholars, but, as Elder Neal A. Maxwell stated, “in the end all the hyphenated words come off. We are finally disciples—men and women of Christ.”²⁵ As disciples of Christ we can look back or look forward with an eye of faith and see our life, including our professional service, as something that continues to grow, progress, and shoot off new branches and is sometimes pruned for our own good.²⁶ As we plant the word of Christ in our heart and nourish it with our faith, our consecrated life of worship becomes as “a tree, springing up in [us] unto everlasting life.”²⁷

Worship, Salvation, and Burdens

Worship is at its essence a question of salvation. We worship what we think will save us. If we worship wealth and power, at some level that is because we think that money and influence will smooth our path, resolve our problems, and save us from our greatest difficulties. If we worship principles, we think that we are saved by a correct understanding of true principles. Understanding true principles will solve challenges, open doors, and free us from unpleasant consequences in this life and the next. If we worship goals, we see salvation as the accomplishment of something eternally worthwhile, such as entering into the highest degree of glory or having an eternal family. Accomplishing these goals will save us from mistakes, regrets, and ultimate failure.

I would suggest that worshipping a living God involves a measurably different vision of salvation than that found in a worship of principles or goals. At its heart, a worship of principles relies on the power of knowing and understanding. However, “[i]n contrast to the institutions of the world, which teach us to *know* something,” taught Elder Dallin H. Oaks, “the gospel of Jesus Christ challenges us to *become* something.”²⁸ Instead of just a set of correct principles, “[t]he gospel of Jesus Christ is the plan by which we can become what children

of God are supposed to become.”²⁹ This is a difference in nature, not of emphasis. Some might argue that correct principles include the Atonement of Christ and that we cannot learn principles without living them. I would suggest, however, that worshipping principles and worshipping a living God are as different as a dead piece of lumber is to a living tree. Worship of a living God transforms us: we plant the seed of faith in the living Christ and it becomes “a tree, springing up in [us] unto everlasting life.” Christ’s Atonement provides us the cleansing and enabling power to save us from our own limitations and change our natures in a way that mere knowledge of principles cannot. Worshipping a living, powerful being means trusting in Him for our salvation from fear, fault, sin, and death.

In a similar way, worshipping a living God is sharply distinct from a worship of goals. One who worships goals sees them as the objects of our existence and sees salvation as checking off the boxes on a most eternally important to-do list. Salvation here is static—it means not being condemned, not missing out, and having some accomplishment completed. President Dieter F. Uchtdorf has repeatedly challenged this approach:

In our diligent efforts to fulfill all of the duties and obligations we take on as members of the Church, we sometimes see the gospel as a long list of tasks that we must add to our already impossibly long to-do list, as a block of time that we must somehow fit into our busy schedules. We focus on what the Lord wants us to do and how we might do it, but we sometimes forget why.

*My dear sisters [and brothers], the gospel of Jesus Christ is not an obligation; it is a pathway, marked by our loving Father in Heaven, leading to happiness and peace in this life and glory and inexpressible fulfillment in the life to come.*³⁰

In contrast to a worship of goals, which sees salvation as accomplishment and completion, worshipping Christ involves a salvation of continued development, a “pathway” to peace, glory, and inexpressible fulfillment. Salvation is understood as transformational becoming, not accomplishing a set of objectives. We worship a living God who has the

power to overcome the limitations of our mortality and failures and help us be “alive in Christ,”³¹ bearing fruit and becoming increasingly like Him.

In the end, the problem with false gods is not that they are always wholly evil but that they prove more of a burden than a blessing. In an extended passage in chapter 46, Isaiah sets up a powerful and moving contrast between the power of false gods and that of the true and living God. He describes the Israelites carrying their idols on their cattle and in their carts as they go into bondage in Babylon: “[T]heir idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: your carriages were heavy loaden; they are a burden to the weary beast. They stoop, they bow down together, they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity.”³²

Isaiah continues, posing the Lord’s question to those worshipping false gods:

To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like?

They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith; and he maketh it a god: they fall down, yea, they worship.

*They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place, and he standeth; from his place shall he not remove: yea, one shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble.*³³

The idols of ancient Israel, like our modern false gods, are powerless. We build them and carry them, even as we are going into bondage, yet they cannot save us out of our troubles. They cannot carry our burdens, ease our pains, or answer our deepest longings. Instead, we carry them and are worn down by the burdens they place on us.

In contrast, the true and living God carries and delivers us. In this same chapter Isaiah proclaims the Lord’s encompassing promise of deliverance:

Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb:

*And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.*³⁴

Jesus Christ is the true and living God of Israel who is mighty to save. From our birth through old age He has promised to carry, bear, and deliver us if we choose to worship Him. He alone is worthy of worship; He alone possesses the power to redeem and transform us and those we love. Our false gods burden us and leave us feeling overwhelmed and inadequate, but Christ's "yoke is easy, and [his] burden is light."³⁵

I echo Amulek, who taught that "the word is in Christ unto salvation."³⁶ As we plant and nourish this word of "the Son of God, that he will come to redeem his people, and that he shall suffer and die to atone for their sins; and that he shall rise again from the dead,"³⁷ as Alma promises, "it will become a tree, springing up in [us] unto everlasting life. And then may God grant unto [us] that [our] burdens may be light, through the joy of his Son."³⁸ As we nourish the word, Christ in turn nourishes us:

*And because of your diligence and your faith and your patience with the word in nourishing it, that it may take root in you, behold, by and by ye shall pluck the fruit thereof, which is most precious, which is sweet above all that is sweet . . . ; and ye shall feast upon this fruit even until ye are filled, that ye hunger not, neither shall ye thirst.*³⁹

As we worship Christ, we are fed, we are carried, and we are changed to become increasingly like Him.⁴⁰ We become fruitful trees.

I am grateful for a living, loving God and for the reality of His saving power. I have felt His transformative power in my life and know that He has carried me and made my burdens light. May we all ever worship Him. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

This essay is adapted from a Spirit of the Law address given at BYU Law School on March 5, 2002.

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NOTES

- 1 Spencer W. Kimball, *The False Gods We Worship*, ENSIGN, June 1976, at 6.
- 2 *Id.* at 4.
- 3 D&C 1:16.
- 4 Bruce C. Hafen, *Ambiguity in Law and in Life*, CLARK MEMORANDUM, spring 2011, at 16.
- 5 Mosiah 12:31–32.
- 6 Mosiah 12:33.
- 7 Mosiah 13:28.
- 8 D&C 93:19.
- 9 *See* D&C 93:1–17.
- 10 3 Nephi 27:13.
- 11 *See* 1 Nephi 11.
- 12 Alma 33:23.
- 13 *See* 2 Nephi 25:27: "Wherefore, we speak concerning the law that our children may know the deadness of the law; and they, by knowing the deadness of the law, may look forward unto that life which is in Christ, and know for what end the law was given."
- 14 Matthew 25:40.
- 15 Ezra Taft Benson, *The Great Commandment—Love the Lord*, ENSIGN, May 1988, at 4.
- 16 D. Todd Christofferson, *Reflections on a Consecrated Life*, ENSIGN, Nov. 2010, at 19; *quoting* D&C 97:9.
- 17 CHIEKO N. OKAZAKI, ALOHA! 64 (1995); *see also id.* at 64–79.
- 18 *Id.* at 65–66.
- 19 Ephesians 3:17, 19.
- 20 OKAZAKI, *supra* note 17, at 66.
- 21 *See* Jeffery A. Thompson, *What Is Your Calling in Life?* in BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY SPEECHES 2010–2011 (2011), at 41.
- 22 *Id.* at 46–47.
- 23 *Id.* at 52.
- 24 *Id.* at 50.
- 25 Neal A. Maxwell, *The Disciple-Scholar*, in ON BECOMING A DISCIPLE-SCHOLAR: LECTURES PRESENTED AT THE BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM DISCIPLINE AND DISCIPLESHIP LECTURE SERIES 1, 21 (Henry B. Eyring, ed., 1995).
- 26 Hugh B. Brown's wonderful story of pruning and career disappointments is a perfect example of this. *See* Hugh B. Brown, *The Currant Bush*, NEW ERA, Jan. 1973, at 14–15; *see also* D. Todd Christofferson, "As Many as I Love, I Rebuke and Chasten," ENSIGN, May 2011, at 98–99.
- 27 Alma 33:23.
- 28 Dallin H. Oaks, *The Challenge to Become*, ENSIGN, Nov. 2000, at 32.
- 29 *Id.* at 33.
- 30 Dieter F. Uchtdorf, *Forget Me Not*, ENSIGN, Nov. 2011, at 122 (emphasis in original); *see also* Dieter F. Uchtdorf, *Of Regrets and Resolutions*, ENSIGN, Nov. 2012, at 21; Dieter F. Uchtdorf, *Of Things That Matter Most*, ENSIGN, Nov. 2010, at 19.
- 31 2 Nephi 25:25.
- 32 Isaiah 46:1–2.
- 33 Isaiah 46:5–7.
- 34 Isaiah 46:3–4.
- 35 Matthew 11:30.
- 36 Alma 34:6.
- 37 Alma 33:22.
- 38 Alma 33:23.
- 39 Alma 32:42; *see also* Revelation 2:7 and 7:16–17.
- 40 *See, e.g.,* Alma 5:14; 1 John 3:2; and Moroni 7:48.